

Injuries of the breast

Haematoma

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Haematoma, particularly a resolving haematoma, gives rise to a lump that, in the absence of overlying bruising, is difficult to diagnose correctly unless it is biopsied. Traumatic fat necrosis may be acute or chronic and usually occurs in stout, middle-aged women. Following a blow, a lump, which is often painless, appears. This may mimic a carcinoma, even displaying skin tethering and nipple retraction; biopsy is required for diagnosis. A history of trauma is not diagnostic as this may merely have drawn the patient's attention to a pre-existing lump. In a road traffic accident, a seatbelt may transect or avulse the breast off the underlying pectoral muscles owing to a sudden deceleration injury.

Revision #1

Created 2025-12-31 15:21:45 UTC by Omar Ayman

Updated 2025-12-31 15:21:45 UTC by Omar Ayman